



SEAPORT

NORTH CENTRAL IDAHO: CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS, & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Seaport's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in October increased to 4.5 percent from September's rate of 4.3 percent. In October 2003 the rate was 4.2 percent. The number of *Non-farm Payroll Jobs* in October remained at the same level as in September. Year-over-year, however, there was a decrease of 580 jobs. The job decrease since last year was mainly a result of decreases in *Professional & Business Services* and *Government*. October is traditionally the month that holiday hiring begins. In October holiday hiring was slow, but is expected to pick up in November.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

Idaho & Lewis Counties

- In October, the Grangeville City Council approved a \$45,000 loan to the Snowhaven Ski Board to develop a tubing hill. The loan will be used to purchase a lift along with additional equipment. Work began in September on the new tubing hill and should be completed in time to open this season. The Snowhaven Ski Board expects the addition to gross \$30,000 to \$50,000 a season and employ an additional four to five people. "These tubing hills are very popular," said Todd Marek, chair of the board's expansion committee. According to Marek, tubing hills are being recommended as additions to existing ski facilities to improve profits. Marek believes that due to popularity and ease of use, the number of tubers could easily exceed skiers. The loan was authorized out of the city's non-dedicated timber fund, monies which are generated from periodic harvest of municipal land in the nearby watershed. As of September 30, the fund totaled \$279,382.

Seaport Table 1: Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	Oct 2004*	Sep 2004	Oct 2003	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	35,490	35,900	35,260	-1.1	0.7
Unemployment	1,580	1,540	1,470	2.6	7.5
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.5	4.3	4.2		
Total Employment	33,910	34,360	33,790	-1.3	0.4
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	35,130	35,350	34,870	-0.6	0.7
Unemployment	1,350	1,160	1,250	16.4	8.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.8	3.3	3.6		
Total Employment	33,780	34,190	33,620	-1.2	0.5
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	26,230	26,230	26,810	0.0	-2.2
Goods-Producing Industries	4,650	4,690	4,530	-0.9	2.6
Natural Resources & Mining	220	220	240	0.0	-8.3
Construction	1,310	1,290	1,230	1.6	6.5
Manufacturing	3,120	3,180	3,060	-1.9	2.0
Wood Product Manufacturing	560	590	550	-5.1	1.8
Food Manufacturing	70	70	100	0.0	-30.0
Paper Manufacturing	1,160	1,190	1,140	-2.5	1.8
Other Manufacturing	1,330	1,330	1,270	0.0	4.7
Service-Providing Industries	21,580	21,540	22,280	0.2	-3.1
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,460	5,440	5,490	0.4	-0.5
Wholesale Trade	620	650	640	-4.6	-3.1
Retail Trade	3,590	3,530	3,560	1.7	0.8
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,160	1,170	1,200	-0.9	-3.3
Information	380	370	380	2.7	0.0
Financial Activities	1,880	1,870	1,840	0.5	2.2
Professional & Business Services	1,340	1,320	1,570	1.5	-14.6
Education & Health Services	4,060	4,030	4,080	0.7	-0.5
Leisure & Hospitality	2,500	2,500	2,530	0.0	-1.2
Other Services	1,080	1,080	1,100	0.0	-1.8
Government Education	2,190	2,260	2,490	-3.1	-12.0
Government Administration	1,880	1,860	1,990	1.1	-5.5
Government Tribes	810	810	810	0.0	0.0

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that 78 percent of the U.S. winter wheat crop was in good to excellent condition, well above the 48 percent of a year ago. The crop—planted in 18 states during the autumn, is dormant in the winter, and then has a head start when growth resumes in the springtime—is 93 percent planted, according to the USDA. Planting for this region has been completed and fields are in good shape for the winter.

Latah County

- The University of Idaho Foundation has paid half of the \$26 million debt it incurred in its failed attempt to build the University Place satellite campus in Boise. And if things go as the foundation has planned, the entire debt could be paid off as early as spring 2005. According to foundation officials, a recent flurry of income enabled the foundation to start paying off the debt. The largest chunk of money came in November from a \$5.5 million payment from Idaho State University. The Pocatello school bought a UI satellite campus in Idaho Falls from the foundation. Other money came from the Idaho State Building Authority; contractors who built the Idaho Water Center, the only surviving University Place component, returned about \$4.5 million to the foundation. The final \$3 million came from the sale of the land referred to as the Rite Aid parcel in Boise. The foundation paid \$1.9 million for the land, situated across the street from the Water Center. It was to be used for the two University Place buildings, which were canceled last year.
- Shipping wheat by rail from the Palouse has been assured for another 15 years. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) announced an \$8 million purchase in November of the Palouse River and Coulee City (PRCC) Railroad right-of-way and tracks. The PRCC railroad, which had been owned and operated by Kansas-based Watco Inc., runs throughout Latah & Whitman County and into neighboring counties where it connects to national rail lines. Under the agreement reached with Watco, the company will continue to own the trains and railroad cars, and will bill shippers for its services. The line handles about 20 percent of the wheat from the region, and about \$160 million worth of goods are shipped on the railroad each year. In addition to the \$8 million cost of buying the tracks, the state has agreed to spend \$22 million to repair and upgrade the 300 miles of rail lines that make up the PRCC. Watco said two years ago that it couldn't operate at a profit and repair the tracks, which had fallen into disrepair over decades. Company representatives made it clear Watco might be forced to leave the area and tear up the tracks for their salvage value. This led to an 18-month process undertaken by WSDOT to analyze the line, its customers, and the value of saving the railroad.
- The University of Idaho will receive an addition of more than \$10 million in research funding

from a large federal spending bill signed in November. In addition to an award of nearly \$1.2 million for research on canola (a genetic variation of rapeseed developed by Canadian plant breeders for uses such as cooking oil), other beneficiaries at the Moscow University include math, forestry and space research. The Lionel Hampton Artist in Residence and the Lionel Hampton Scholars program at the school were awarded \$400,000.

Nez Perce and Asotin Counties

- The new 100,000-square-foot, three-level Lewis-Clark State College Activity Center is nearing completion. A basketball game January 6 is tentatively scheduled as the first event to be held in the center. The ground was broken on the estimated \$15 million project in August 2003. The activity center is the first phase. Other phases include building additional parking lots, tearing down the old Warrior Gym and its annex, and building an auxiliary gym and classrooms in their places. There is much more to the new activity center than a basketball court. When it's completed, there will be dance and exercise studios, athletic offices, and concession stands that will serve both the activity center and adjacent baseball field. A large room called the Warrior Room will be available for rent during games. It will include sliding glass doors overlooking the basketball court and a door to a roof terrace.
- Thirty-two new homes are being built in the Sundown Heights subdivision south of Lapwai. Construction started in November and the homes, which cost a total of \$3.7 million, and will mark the end of seven years of planning. The final house will be finished by next September. The roads, sewer systems, and streetlights were ready by the end of 2002 at a cost of \$3.5 million. The 100-acre subdivision is designed to accommodate 64 homes.

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